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Response

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A method for making a firm, flexible animal feed gel, the method comprising the steps of:

A. Forming a liquid animal feed in a heated vat and at a temperature above ambient temperature, the animal feed comprising predominantly water;

B. Transferring [Passing] the liquid animal feed of step (A) from the vat to and through a pipe cooled to a temperature below the temperature of the liquid animal feed of step (A) such that the feed solidifies to a stiff, flexible gel while in the pipe; and

C. Collecting the gel as the gel exits the pipe.

2. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 in which the liquid animal feed comprises [water,] at least one gelling agent and at least one source of animal protein.

3. (Original): The method of claim 2 in which the gelling agent comprises at least one gelatin and at least one gum.

4. (Original): The method of claim 2 in which the liquid animal feed enters the pipe at a temperature of at least about 120 F.

5. (Original): The method of claim 2 in which the gel exits the pipe at about ambient temperature.

6. (Original): The method of claim 5 in which the gel is cut into pre-determined lengths as it exits the pipe.

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7. (Currently Amended): An apparatus for making [extruding] a firm, flexible animal feed gel comprising predominantly water, the apparatus comprising:

A. A pipe having an inlet end and an outlet end, the inlet adapted for receiving a liquid animal feed comprising predominantly water and at a temperature in excess of ambient temperature, and the outlet end adapted for extruding a firm, flexible animal feed gel;

B. A pump for passing the liquid animal feed through the pipe;

C. A means for cooling the liquid animal feed to a temperature below the temperature of the liquid animal feed of step (A) such that the feed solidifies to a stiff, flexible gel while in the pipe; and

D. A means for collecting gel as it exits the pipe.

8. (Original): The apparatus of claim 7 in which the pipe is a straight pipe and the cooling means is a cooling jacket.

9. (Original): The apparatus of claim 7 in which the pipe is a coiled pipe and the cooling means is a holding container filled with a cooling liquid.

10. (Original): The apparatus of claim 8 in which the cooling jacket is filled with circulating water.

11. (Original): The apparatus of claim 9 in which the cooling liquid is circulating water.

12. (Original): The apparatus of claim 7 further equipped with a cutting means with which to cut the gel into pre-determined lengths as the gel exits the pipe.

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13. (New): The apparatus of Claim 7 in fluid communication with a heated vat from which the pipe receives the liquid animal feed.

14. (New): The apparatus of Claim 13 further comprising a pump for transferring the liquid animal feed from the vat to the inlet end of the pipe.

15. (New): The method of Claim 1 in which the liquid animal feed is transferred from the vat to the pipe and passed through the pipe by the action of a pump.

16. (New): The method of Claim 15 in which the pipe is equipped with a cooling jacket, and the liquid animal feed is cooled while it passes through the pipe due to the cooling effect the jacket has on the pipe.

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